

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03

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SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-19 OMB-01 DRC-01 /153 W

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R 191104Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4322

DIA WASHDC

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USINT BAGHDAD

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DEPT PASS CAIRO

EO 11652: N/A DECON 9-19974

TAGS: PINS XF

SUBJECT: FATAH-SYRIAN RELATIONS

REF; BEIRUT 10956 AND 10785 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: REPORTS OF SYRIAN RESTRICTIONS ON FATAH/PLO
ACTIVITIES CONTINUE TO SURFACE HERE, ALTHOUGH SARG
IS SAID TO BE ANXIOUS AVOID OPEN RUPTURE WITH FEDAYEEN.
LEBANESE AUTHORITIES REMAIN DESIROUS OF KEEPING LOCAL REPER-
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CUSSIONS OF FATAH-SYRIA SQUABBLE TO A MINIMUM. END

SUMMARY.

1. SEPT 19 L'ORIENT-LE JOUR CARRIES ANOTHER EXCLUSIVE REPORT FROM "WELL INFORMED SOURCES" IN DAMASCUS THAT SYRIAN AUTHORITIES HAVE RECENTLY ORDERED FATAH/PLO "HIGH COMMAND" TO EVACUATE FEDAYEEN BASES IN REGION BETWEEN MAYSALLOUN AND DAMASCUS FAIRGROUNDS ALONG DAMASCUS-BEIRUT HIGHWAY AND HAVE ALSO FORBIDDEN FATAH TO USE SO-CALLED "ARAFAT TRAIL", HITHERTO MAIN ARTERY OF FEDAYEEN SUPPLY AND PERSONNEL MOVEMENT BETWEEN SYRIA AND LEBANON. IN ADDITION, SARG REPORTED TO HAVE CRACKED DOWN ON OTHER FATAH ACTIVITIES IN SYRIA, TEARING DOWN POSTERS IN DAMASCUS SUBURBS PROTESTING DETENTE WITH KING HUSSEIN AND ARRESTING MORE THAN DOZEN FATAH MEMBERS CAUGHT DISTRIBUTING PLO PROPAGANDA IN DAMASCUS AND HOMS.

2. L'ORIENT ARTICLE CONTENDS THAT DESPITE THESE DEVELOPMENTS AND THOSE REPORTED REFTEL, SARG REMAIN ANXIOUS TO AVOID OPEN RUPTURE WITH FATAH/PLO LEADERSHIP. PRES ASSAD IS REPORTEDLY WORRIED THAT THIS WOULD LEAD TO INCREASED IRAQI INFLUENCE OVER FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT AND PROVOKE ADVERSE REPERCUSSIONS EVEN WITHIN SARG-CONTROLLED SA'IQA, SOME OF WHOSE RANK-AND-FILE ALLEGEDLY HAVE ALREADY DESERTED (OR BEEN ARRESTED BY SYRIAN POLICE) IN PROTEST AGAINST SARG'S SHUT-DOWN OF VOP RADIO STATION AT DERA'A.

3. MEANWHILE, FEDAYEEN AND LOCAL LEFTIST AGITATION AGAINST DETENTE WITH JORDAN CONTINUES IN LEBANON. PROTEST RALLIES OSTENSIBLY HELD TO COMMEMORATE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF "BLACK SEPTEMBER") OCCUR ALMOST DAILY IN BEIRUT, IN COURSE OF WHICH GOJ AND "DEFEATIST ARAB REGIMES" ARE VILIFIED FOR "BETRAYING" PALESTINIAN CAUSE. SEPT 18 AMNESTY DECLARED BY KING HUSSEIN SEEMS LIKELY TO INFURIATE FEDAYEEN AND THEIR SUPPORTERS HERE EVEN MORE (SEPT 18), THUS ADDING TO EXISTING INTRA-FEDAYEEN AND GOL-FEDAYEEN TENSIONS. WE HAVE HAD SEVERAL REPORTS OVER PAST FEW DAYS OF HEIGHTENED FATAH-SA'IQA TENSIONS AND OF ONE OR TWO ARMED ATTACKS ON SA'IQA ELEMENTS IN OR NEAR VARIOUS REFUGEE CAMPS. GOL AUTHORITIES HAVE ALSO ARRESTED SEVERAL FEDAYEEN FOUND POSTING ANTI-DETENTE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PLACARDS IN PARTS OF BEIRUT AND ARE ATTEMPTING PERSUADE FEDAYEEN LEADERS TO REMOVE ARMED COMMANDOS FROM STRATEGIC POINTS THEY HAVE LATELY OCCUPIED IN OLD PART OF SIDON. IN WHAT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN EFFORT TO AVOID HAVING TENSION GET OUT OF HAND, PRIMIN SOLH, IN NEWS CONFERENCE SEPT 18 (FBIS M181644), MADE POINT OF DESCRIBING GOL-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS AS "SERENE AND NATURAL", ADDING THERE WAS NO REASON TO EXPECT "BLACK OCTOBER"

IN LEBANON--AS ALLEGED BY LEFTIST LEADER MAMAL JUMBLATT
(FBIS M181618). SOLH REFUSED REPLY TO FACETIOUS NEWSMAN
WHO ASKED IF GOL MIGHT CLOSE LEBANESE-SYRIAN BORDER IN
PROTEST AGAINST "ILL-TREATMENT OF FEDAYEEN" IN SYRIA.
HOUGHTON

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CAIRO

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